

## Class Four: Spiritual Warfare

### Cross as Victory

1. What is our problem? We are powerless to the cosmic forces of sin and evil
2. What did Christ do on the cross? Christ conquered the forces of sin and evil
3. How did that address our problem? We are no longer subject to the forces of sin and evil

#### A: Origins of Suffering and Evil in the Bible

- Old Testament contains “evil spirits” and “lying spirits,” but there is no Hebrew word for “demon”; Evil spirits are limited by God’s will and power<sup>i</sup>
- In the Second Temple Period (530 BC – 70 AD), apocalyptic literature explored ideas about angels, demons, end times, and resurrection<sup>ii</sup>

Evil came from Adam and Eve’s original sin (idea first found around 150 BC in the Book of Jubilees)<sup>iii</sup>

OR

Evil came from fallen angels who consorted with humans (the Nephilim from Genesis 6) and led us astray (Book of Enoch, ~300 BC)<sup>iv</sup>

#### B: Angels, Fallen Angels, and Demons

- Angels said to be created on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day before humans; angel means messenger<sup>v</sup>
- Only Michael and Gabriel are mentioned by name in the Bible<sup>vi</sup>
- Angels are stronger and smarter than humans, but not infallible<sup>vii</sup>
- NT refers to “Satan and his angels” as well as angels who sinned and were cast out of heaven
- Catholics see the War in Heaven (Rev 12) as a repeat of the original rebellion that caused Satan and his angels to be cast out<sup>viii</sup>
- Earliest use of “Demon” from the Greeks ~7<sup>th</sup> century BC; they understood them as spiritual beings that could be good or bad<sup>ix</sup>
- Demons were considered evil in the Second Temple writings (both Jewish and Christian)<sup>x</sup>



#### C: Satan (Accuser) /Devil (Deceiver)

- First appears in 1 Chr 21:1, Job 1, and Zech 3 as a member of the divine council – an angel whose job is to act as accuser or prosecuting attorney<sup>xi</sup>
- In the OT, he has access to God’s presence and is seen as a bad influence<sup>xii</sup>

- By the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, theology about Satan merged with beliefs about demons to present Satan as Devil as instigator of sin, evil, and death<sup>xiii</sup>
- In the NT, Satan is prince of this age – our present world order comes from his principles and designs (e.g. politics, business, positions of power, etc.)<sup>xiv</sup>

#### D: Christus Victor

<sup>xv</sup>

Gustaf Aulén: Swedish, writing in 1931

- Drew on Greek fathers like Origen & Augustine, and Luther<sup>xvi</sup>
- Sin has made us prisoners of the devil and kept us in his power so that evil is powerful and exists everywhere<sup>xvii</sup>
- Jesus first defeated Satan during the temptations, continued with exorcisms, and decisively defeated him on the cross<sup>xviii</sup>
- Christ's death was the decisive victory in the battle of good versus evil, confirmed by the resurrection because he did not use the weapons of evil (force and violence) but of love and self-sacrifice<sup>xix</sup>



Other versions:

- There is a war between God and the devil and we are prisoners of war in Satan's kingdom. In his death, Christ went behind enemy lines to free us for all eternity (when we rise with Christ)<sup>xx</sup>
- Gregory of Nyssa (4<sup>th</sup> Century Cappadocian Father) – Christ was the bait. Seeing him as merely human, the devil overstepped his bounds and tried to consume God. Since that is impossible, he was conquered<sup>xxi</sup>

"[God] has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13-14)

#### E: Critique and Questions

- If Jesus' life is a ransom, who is receiving this payment? The devil? God?
- How do we talk about victory over sin, evil, and death when those things are still prevalent in our world?
- Does the idea of a cosmic battle seem too mythological to you? Could this lead to justifications of violence in the name of God? Or is Jesus laying down his life a non-violent model for us?
- Does this make humanity a trophy of war that God and the devil are fighting over? Do we achieve a change in status, but no real inner change?
- How do you feel about God making a deal with the devil to win our salvation?

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- <sup>i</sup> R.K. Harrison, "Demon," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney and Moises Silva (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2009), 98-99.
- <sup>ii</sup> Ibid, 101-102.
- <sup>iii</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demonology>
- <sup>iv</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>v</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel>
- <sup>vi</sup> G.B. Funderburk, "Angel," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney and Moises Silva (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2009), 185.
- <sup>vii</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel>
- <sup>viii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_in\\_Heaven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Heaven)
- <sup>ix</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demonology>
- <sup>x</sup> Harrison, 101-103.
- <sup>xi</sup> William C. Placher. *Jesus the Savior: The Meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian Faith* (Winnipeg: Mannitoba Education Media Production Services Unit, 2009), 146.
- <sup>xii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fallen\\_angel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fallen_angel)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Placher, 146.
- <sup>xiv</sup> D.E. Hiebert, "Satan," in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney and Moises Silva (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zonderan, 2009), 334.
- <sup>xv</sup> "Gustaf Aulen," 1930-1940. Unknown author. From [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gustaf\\_Aul%C3%A9n.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gustaf_Aul%C3%A9n.jpg)
- <sup>xvi</sup> William C. Placher. "How does Jesus Save?," *Christian Century* 126, no. 11 (June 2, 2009), <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2009-06/how-does-jesus-save>.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Hiebert, 336.
- <sup>xix</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christus\\_Victor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christus_Victor)
- <sup>xx</sup> Shirley Caperton Guthrie. *Christian Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 253.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Placher "How Does Jesus Save?."